



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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October 13, 2003

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## **COUNTY AGGRESSIVELY WORKS TO DETECT WEST NILE VIRUS** *Local Action Comes As First Human Case Investigated in Riverside County*

San Diego County officials said today they will continue aggressive efforts to detect West Nile virus, now that a Riverside County man appears to have contracted the first locally acquired case of the disease in California this year.

The 31-year old man was hospitalized with aseptic meningitis in late September and is currently recovering at home. Over the past several months, mosquitoes, sentinel chickens and wild birds have tested positive for West Nile in Imperial, Riverside and San Bernardino counties. So far, the virus has not been detected in San Diego County.

"We have anticipated the arrival of West Nile virus to our County for some time now," said Gary Erbeck, director of the County Department of Environmental Health. "We are increasing our surveillance and treatment efforts so that we will know as soon as West Nile reaches San Diego County, and to minimize its potential impact on people and animals."

The County's Vector Control and Surveillance staff are in the field daily identifying, treating and eliminating mosquito-breeding sites. Over the summer, Environmental Health conducted four aerial mosquito larvicide applications at known mosquito breeding hot spots.

West Nile virus is primarily a bird disease. Mosquitoes that feed on infected birds become carriers and can pass the virus to humans, horses and other animals when they bite.

While the risk of acquiring the disease is quite low, residents are warned to take precautions, such as wearing long-sleeve shirts and long pants, using insect repellent containing DEET, and removing any standing water on their property, where mosquitoes could breed. Also, it is best to remain indoors at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active.

For information about these precautions and more about West Nile virus, and log on to: [www.FightTheBite.com](http://www.FightTheBite.com) or call 888-551-INFO (4636). To report dead birds or mosquito breeding sites please call (858) 694-2888.

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